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"NOOSES" AND FRANCHISES.

Patrick Francis McGowan.
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"If we had voted such a franchise the people of the city would have taken us out and strung us up to a lamp-post."

This is Acting Mayor McGowan's reported comment on the action of the Rapid-Transit Board in rejecting the Interborough's request for a third-track elevated franchise in perpetuity and without offer of compensation.

Perhaps the figure of speech is extravagant. But behind it is the truth that in the present sensitive state of opinion with regard to the bartering away of franchises the more circumspect a public body is about granting them the better for its standing. Any action suggesting a betrayal of the public interest, such as a favorable report on the Interborough's application would have been, must inevitably provoke sharp criticism.

The amazing thing is the failure of public service corporations asking favors to recognize the temper of the people. In soliciting a perpetual franchise for a nominal price the Interborough assumed an attitude which would have been deemed arrogant in the days when elevated traction was an untried experiment.

Similar shortsightedness has marked the negotiations of the Pennsylvania and the New Haven for the Connecting Railroad franchise. In a letter to President Orr Vice-President Rea alleges that the delays already forced upon his road will make the project cost twice as much as originally contemplated. "We must suffer from the very advantages we have created," he says.

As a matter of fact the roads are suffering from the mistaken policy of trying to get for a song a valuable right for which they now find themselves required to pay a fair and adequate price.

THE COST.

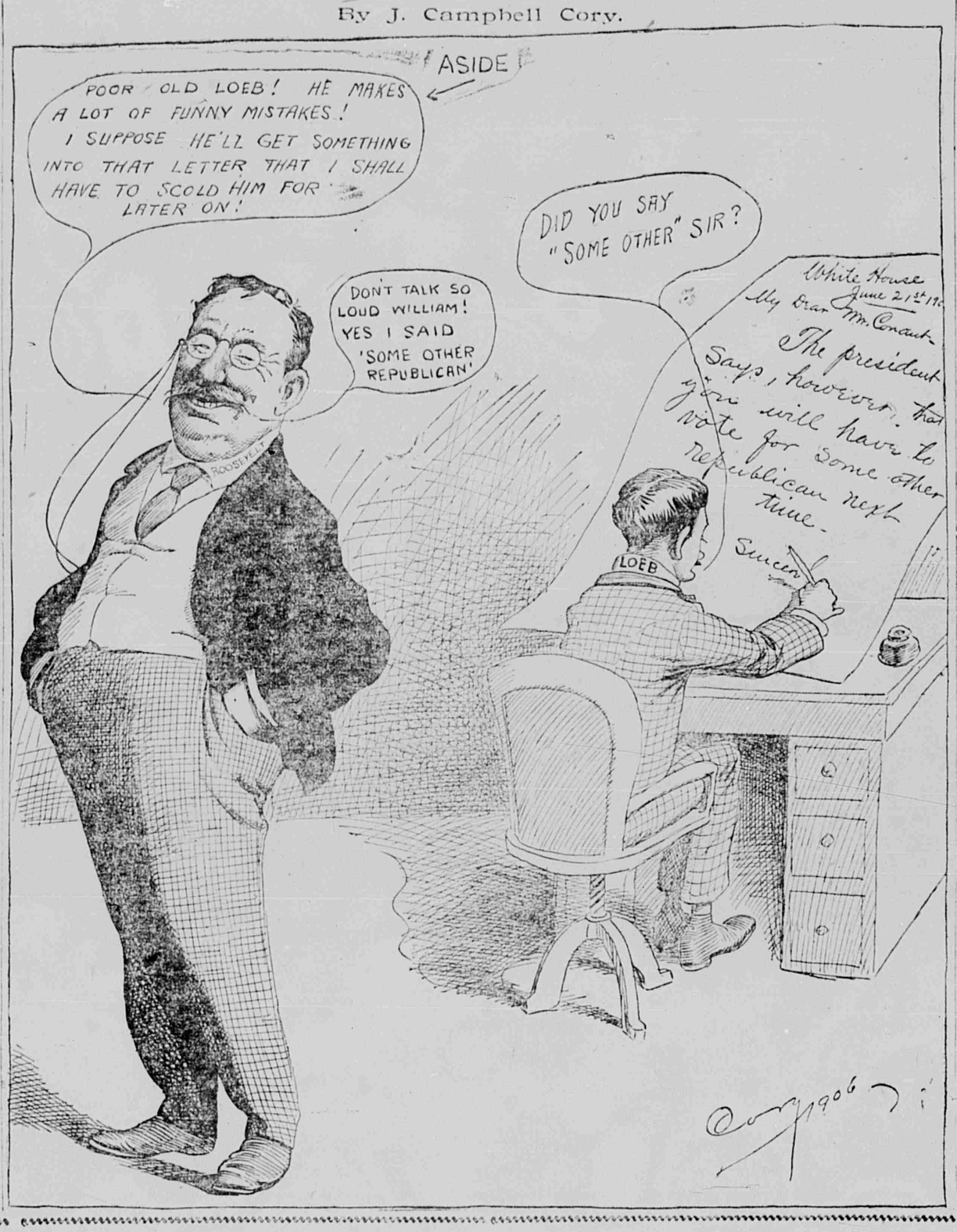
The absence of Senators Platt and Depew when the public building allotment was made by the Senate committee cost the State of New York $582,000. The city lost $450,000 by the elimination of the item appropriating that amount for the New York Custom House.

These figures relate to monetary cost. But who is to estimate the heavier cost in dignity, in character, in reputation entailed on the State by its misrepresentative Senators? For a year the two most important seats in the upper house have been constructively empty. The pocket borough State of Rhode Island, with a population less than that of Harlem, has been more capably represented. The State which should have the most potent voice in national councils sits in humiliating silence while Alabama, South Carolina and Massachusetts shape legislation. That is one part of the cost.

Mme. Bernhardt, talking to a Parisian interviewer about America says she found us proud of our achievements and grateful to the land which has made them possible. "It is not astonishing," she says, "that Americans should be inspired with patriotic fire. They are a nation in the best sense of the word. There is no parasite class among them. In reaching this land of freedom one draws a long breath of the pure air of liberty." It is obvious that Mme. Sarah could qualify as a Fourth of July orator. She is competent to make the eagle scream. She is to be complimented on a correctness of observation not always acquired by visitors from abroad who see New York, but forget the vast back country beyond the Hudson.

Poor Loeb!

By J. Campbell Cory.



NEW YORK THRO' FUNNY GLASSES

By Irving S. Cobb.

A CAT has nine lives. Which goes to show what a bulge a popular song has on a cat.

In some parts of the country when a popular song begins to get too blamed popular everybody clubs in and just naturally sings it to death. After these simple but efficacious obsequies, if any thoughtless vocalist undertakes to haul Old Familiar out of the tomb the nearest person passes him the lemon extract.

But in New York they take hold and hang on. For seven long, weary months such of the populace as feed at cafes have been deliriously heaving in their lobster salad to the tune of "Waiting at the Choirch," and getting chronic indigestion on account of the quick time in the chorus. Physicians report that we have in our midst twice as much dyspepsia now as in the days of the vogue for airs that were suited to the slow and dreamy style of mastication. When the orchestra used to doze off on the "Miserere" you either had to chew slowly or get ahead of the music. And yet "Waiting at the Choirch," under its own name or an alias, will be doing duty on Broadway when we've all forgotten whether Vesta Victoria was an actorine or a brand of cigarettes.

Yes, indeedy, dearest, this is certainly the town where a good, industrious song-hit, satisfied with no afternoons out a week and willing to work nights, need never lack for a home. When it begins to get a little bit frayed and travel-worn after a year's steady employment, some free-hearted composer always adopts it and gives it a flossy new title, and writes some fresh or almost fresh words for it, and switches around about two bars in the introduction, and transposes a few of the "la-la" notes and starts it out again. That's the reason why going to comic opera these days is so much like attending an experience meeting. The music is sure

to bring up many memories—sort of reminiscent without being novel, like the hiccough after the highball.

Our justly noted musical yeggmen ransack 'em up, roots and all, when they start in to kidnapping one another's prizes. You can trace the course of a real peart tune clear back through the Dark Ages. George Cohan swiped it from Banks Winters and Banks Winters hypothecated it from Gilbert & Sullivan, and Gilbert & Sullivan had it from Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, and Dr. Johnson's Dictionary copied it off of an Egyptian tomb. You might go farther than that, but some one would be apt to accuse you of exaggerating the true facts.

We drop into a roof garden some night when we're not looking where we're going, and the sassy cut-ups sing a topical song on Pocklington and John D. and other comedy props, beginning something like this:

An actor to the stockyards went,
Fell down a chute—her slam!
How fitting that when he came back
His name was "Potted Ham!"
Lum! Lum!
His name was "Potted Ham!"

Fine! says we, and go around humming the same in office hours until the boss begins to figure on firing us.

In about nine months the baritone person, who always comes on just after the performing dogs, hands us out the same air, only this time it is doing service for a touching little lullaby entitled, "Dream On, Tessie Darling, I Will Roll the Pills for Thee."

Two years hence we meet the tune again, still hale and hearty. It is now being starred in connection with that original and catchy ballad of the Southern mountains, "In the Valley Where the Moonshine Is so Stilly."

THE FUNNY PART:

A good tune never gets stale here until the Salvation Army turns it into a bass-drum solo.

The Masquerader by Katherine Cecil Thurston

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

TO fully appreciate a great announcement we must have time at our disposal. At the moment of Loder's disclosure time was denied to Eve; for scarcely had the words left his lips before the thought that dominated him asserted its prior claim. Blind to the incredulity in her eyes, he drew her swiftly forward, and—half impelling, half supporting her—forced her to descend the stairs.

Never in after-life could he obliterate the remembrance of that descent. Fear, such as he could never experience in his own concerns, possessed him. One desire overrode all others—the desire that Eve's reputation, which he himself had so nearly imperilled, should remain unimperilled. In the shadow of that urgent duty, the despair of the past hours, the appalling fact so lately realized, the future with its possible trials, became dark to his imagination. In his new victory over self, the question of her protection predominated.

Moving under this compulsion, he guided her hastily and silently down the deserted stairs, drawing a breath of deep relief as, one after another, the landings were successively passed; and still actuated by the suppressed need of haste, he passed through the doorway that they had entered under such different conditions only a few minutes before.

To leave the quiet court, to gain the Strand, to hail a belated hansom was the work of a moment. By an odd contrivance of circumstance, the luck that had attended every phase of his dual life was again exerted in his behalf. No one had noticed their entry into Clifford's Inn; no one was moved to curiosity by their exit. With an involuntary thrill of feeling he gave expression to his relief.

"Thank God, it's over!" he said, as a cab drew up. "You don't know what the strain has been."

Moving as if in a dream, Eve stepped into the cab. As yet the terrible denouement to their enterprise had made no clear impression upon her mind. For the moment all that she was conscious of, all that she instinctively acknowledged, was the fact that Loder was still beside her.

In quiet obedience she took her place, drawing aside her skirts to make room for him; and in the same subdued manner he stepped into the vehicle. Then, with the strange sensation of reliving their earlier drive, they were aware of the tightened rein and of the horse's first forward movement.

For several seconds neither spoke. Eve, shutting out all other thoughts, sat close to Loder, clinging tenaciously to the momentary comforting sense of protection; Loder, striving to marshal his ideas, hesitated before the ordeal of speech. At last, realizing his responsibility, he turned to her slowly.

"Eve," he said in a low voice and with some hesitation, "I want you to know that in all this—from the moment I saw him—from the moment I understood—I have had you in my thoughts—you and no one else."

She raised her eyes to his face.

"Do you realize?"— he began afresh. "Do you know what this—this thing means?"

Still she remained silent.

"It means that after to-night there will be no such person in London as John Loder. To-morrow the man who was known by that name will be found in his rooms; his body will be removed, and at the post-mortem examination it will be stated that he died of an overdose of morphia. His charwoman will identify him as a solitary man who lived respectably for years and then suddenly went down hill with remarkable speed. It will be quite a common case. Nothing of interest will be found in his rooms; no relation will claim his body; after the usual time he will be given the usual burial of his class. These details are horrible; but there are times when we must look at the horrible side of life—because life is incomplete without it.

"These things I speak of are the things that will meet the casual eye; but in our sight they will have a very different meaning.

"Eve," he said, more vehemently, "a whole chapter in my life has been closed to-night, and my first instinct is to shut the book and throw it away. But I'm thinking of you. Remember, I'm thinking of you! Whatever the trial, whatever the difficulty, no harm shall come to you. You have my word for that!

"I'll return with you now to Grosvenor Square; I'll remain there till a reasonable excuse can be given for Chilcote's going abroad; I will avoid Fraide, I will cut politics—whatever the cost; then, at the first reasonable moment, I will do what I would do now, to-night if it were possible. I'll go away, start afresh; do in another country what I have done in this."

"John!" she said softly, "I love you!"

There was a long silence; then Eve turned to him. The apathy of a moment before had left her face. "In another country?" she repeated. "In another country?"

"Yes; a fresh career in a fresh country. Something clean to offer you. I'm not too old to do what other men have done."

He paused, and for a moment Eve looked ahead at the gleaming chain of lamps; then, still very slowly, she brought her glance back again. "No," she said very slowly. "You are not too old. But there are times when age—and things like age—are not the real consideration. It seems to me that your own inclination, your own individual sense of right and wrong, has nothing to do with the present moment. The question is whether you are justified in going away"—she paused, her eyes fixed steadily upon his—"whether you are free to go away, and make a new life—whether it is ever justifiable to follow a phantom light, when—when there's a lantern waiting to be carried." Her breath caught; she drew away from him, frightened and elated by her own words.

Loder turned to her sharply. "Eve!" he exclaimed; then his tone changed. "You don't know what you're saying," he added quickly; 'you don't understand what you're saying."

Eve leaned forward again. "Yes," she said slowly, "I do understand." Her voice was controlled, her manner convinced. She was no longer the girl conquered by strength greater than her own; she was the woman strenuously demanding her right to individual happiness.

"I understand it all," she repeated. "I understand every point. It was not Chance that made you change your identity, that made you care for me, that brought about—his death. I don't believe it was Chance; I believe it was something much higher. You are not meant to go away!"

As Loder watched her the remembrance of his first days as Chilcote rose again—the remembrance of how he had been dimly filled with the belief that below her self-possession lay a strength—a depth—uncommon in woman. As he studied her now the instinctive belief flamed into conviction. "Eve!" he said involuntarily.

With a quick gesture she raised her head. "No!" she exclaimed. "No; don't say anything! You are going to see things as I see them—you must do so—you have no choice. No real man ever casts away the substance for the shadow!" Her eyes shone—the color, the glow, the vitality rushed back into her face.

"John," she added softly, "I love you—and I need you—but there is something with a greater claim—a greater need than mine. Don't you know what it is?"

He said nothing; he made no gesture.

"It is the party, the country. You may put love aside, but duty is different. You have pledged yourself. You are not meant to draw back."

Loder's lips parted.

"Don't!" she said again. "Don't say anything! I know all that is in your mind. But when we sift things right through it isn't my love—or our happiness—that's really in the balance. It is your future!" Her voice thrilled. "You are going to be a great man; and a great man is the property of his country. He has no right to individual action."

Again Loder made an effort to speak, but again she checked him.

"Wait!" she exclaimed. "Wait! You believe you have acted wrongly, and you are desperately afraid of acting wrongly again. But is it really truer, more loyal for us to work out a long probation in grooves that are already overfilled than to marry quietly abroad and fill the places that have need of us? That is the question I want you to answer. Is it really truer and nobler? Oh, I see the doubt that is in your mind! You think it finer to go away and make a new life than to live the life that is waiting you—because one is independent and the other means the use of another man's name and another man's money—that is the thought in your mind. But what is it that prompts that thought?" Again her voice caught, but her eyes did not falter. "I will tell you. It is not self-sacrifice—but pride!" She said the word fearlessly.

A flush crossed Loder's face. "A man requires pride," he said in a low voice.

"Yes, at the right time. But is this the right time? Is it ever right to throw away the substance for the shadow? You say that I don't understand—don't realize. I realize more to-night than I have realized in all my life. I know that you have an opportunity that can never come again—and that it's terribly possible to let it slip"——

She paused. Loder, his hands resting on the closed doors of the cab, sat very silent with averted eyes and bent head.

"Only to-night," she went on, "you told me that everything was trying to you to take the easy, pleasant way. Then it was strong to turn aside; but now it is not strong. It is far nobler to fill an empty niche than to carve one for yourself, John"— She suddenly leaned forward, laying her hands over his. "Mr. Fraide told me to-night that in his new ministry my—husband was to be Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs!"

The words fell softly—so softly that to ears less comprehending than Loder's their significance might have been lost—as his rigid attitude and unresponsive manner might have conveyed lack of understanding to any eyes less observant than Eve's.

For a long space there was no word spoken. At last, with a very gentle pressure, her fingers tightened over his hands.

"John"— she began gently. But the word died away. She drew back into her seat as the cab stopped before Chilcote's house.

Simultaneously as they descended the hall door was opened and a flood of warm light poured out reassuringly into the darkness.

"I thought it was my cab, sir," Crapham explained deferentially as they passed into the hall. "Mr. Fraide has been waiting to see you this half hour. I showed him into the study." He closed the door softly and retired.

Then in the warm light, amid the gravely dignified surroundings that had marked his first entry into this hazardous second existence, Eve turned to Loder for the verdict upon which the future hung.

As she turned his face was still hidden from her and his attitude betrayed nothing.

"John," she said slowly, "you know why he is here. You know that he has come to personally offer you this place; to personally receive your refusal—or consent."

She ceased to speak; there was a moment of suspense; then Loder turned. His face was still pale and grave with the gravity of a man who has but recently been close to death, but beneath the gravity was another look—the old expression of strength and self-reliance, tempered, raised and dignified by a new humility.

Moving forward he held out his hands.

"My consent or refusal," he said very quietly, "lies with—my wife."

(THE END.)